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The bacteriology of soiled garments.

NAPLES, ITALY, *July 29, 1902.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following:

Numerous experiments have recently been made in Italy in the bacteriology of different fabrics commonly worn as garments or used as bedding. Drs. D. Viola and G. Morello give in the bulletin of the Sicilian society of hygiene the following conclusions based on their inquiries: Clothing, linen, and other garments are capable of holding a relatively large number of microorganisms, varying from a minimum of 915 to a maximum of 571,962 for each square centimeter of goods. While the greater part of these bacteria are common saprophytic forms, pathogenic germs are also found. The number of bacteria found in garments in actual contact with the human body is in direct ratio to the number of days the garments are worn. In general, the number of bacteria found in clothing of a person is proportional to the activity of his occupation. Wool has a greater capacity for germs than has cotton. Corresponding to the local bacteriological flora of the surface of the human body, there is a qualitative difference in the bacterial contents of clothing covering different parts of the skin. Wool is a more favorable habitat for bacteria than are cotton and silk. In clothing actually being worn pathogenic bacteria live a shorter time than in the same garments hanging in a wardrobe. Pathogenic bacteria flourish better in garments of wool and cotton that are alternately worn and exposed to the air off the body than in clothing constantly worn and hence subjected to the uninterrupted action of the condition offered by the living body. Under all conditions, pathogenic bacteria contained in clothing gradually die out. There is with the passage of time a gradual diminution in the number of disease-producing germs with which a given article of clothing has been contaminated. There is also a progressive decline in the power of development of the bacteria. They undergo a gradual attenuation and a diminution of their virulence.

The experiments conclude that garments are a potent means for the diffusion of infective agents, and that without special treatment pathogenic germs can retain their virulence in human raiment for a considerable but not indefinite period.

Respectfully,

J. M. EAGER,
Passed Assistant Surgeon.

The SURGEON-GENERAL.

KOREA.

Precautions against the introduction of cholera.

[No. 99.]

SEOUL, KOREA, *June 28, 1902.*

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that on the 27th instant, a meeting of the consuls of the treaty powers, the kamni, and the commissioner of customs was held at the custom-house in Chemulpo to decide, in accordance with section 9 of the regulations for the prevention of the introduction of infectious diseases into Korea, whether vessels arriving from ports in China in which cholera is known to exist should be subjected to medical inspection. It was unanimously decided that all the ports of China, as well as Hongkong, were infected with cholera, and that quarantine regulations should be enforced, beginning from the 28th